

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 313

CE 084 425

TITLE EFF Voice, Winter 2001.

INSTITUTION National Inst. for Literacy, Washington, DC.

PUB DATE 2001-00-00

NOTE 15p.; Published annually. Published by the Equipped for the Future (EFF) National Center, Orono, Maine. For the Winter 2002 issue, see ED 462 577.

AVAILABLE FROM ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free); Fax: 301-470-1244; TTY/TDD: 800-437-0833; e-mail: edpubs@inet.ed.gov; Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>. For full text: [http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff\\_voice/vol\\_2\\_no\\_1.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff_voice/vol_2_no_1.pdf).

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)

JOURNAL CIT EFF Voice; v2 n1 Win 2003

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Design; Academic Standards; Accountability; Adult Basic Education; Adult Development; \*Adult Education; \*Adult Literacy; Agency Cooperation; Basic Skills; Cognitive Processes; \*Competency Based Education; Critical Thinking; Culturally Relevant Education; Educational Finance; Educational Needs; Educational Objectives; Educational Theories; English (Second Language); Evaluation Criteria; Evaluation Methods; Federal Aid; Job Skills; Knowledge Level; Learning Processes; Learning Strategies; Mastery Learning; Measurement Techniques; Minimum Competency Testing; \*National Standards; Outcome Based Education; Outcomes of Education; Partnerships in Education; \*Performance Based Assessment; Performance Factors; Public Policy; Relevance (Education); State Programs; \*Student Evaluation; Student Projects; Teacher Collaboration; Teaching Methods; Thinking Skills

IDENTIFIERS Cognitive Fluency; \*Equipped for the Future; Knowledge Bases; Maine; National Reporting System for Adult Education; Ohio; Oregon; Tennessee; Washington

## ABSTRACT

This newsletter reports on the activities of Equipped for the Future (EFF), which is a National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) initiative that develops content standards to ensure that every adult can gain the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill real-world responsibilities as workers, parents, and citizens. A message from the NIFL director (Andrew Hartman) explains that this issue focuses on research and development efforts to develop an assessment framework for the content standards. The article "Integrating EFF Content Standards With the U.S. DOE's National Reporting System" describes a joint project to collect data on EFF performance tasks and to develop a body of performance descriptors. The article "How Instructors Can Support Adult Learners Through Performance-Based Assessment" reviews a EFF handbook aimed at practitioners who measure student performance relative to challenging content and performance standards. The article "The Four Dimensions of Performance" outlines these four dimensions of learning that are used in planning, instruction and assessment at current EFF field development sites: (1) knowledge base; (2) fluency; (3) independence; and (4) range. Other articles in the newsletter examine the following topics: a EFF partnership with the Department of Education's Division of Adult Education

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made  
from the original document.

and Literacy (DAEL); EFF activities in Maine, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington; and services and online resources available from EFF. (AJ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made  
from the original document.

# EFF Voice

Volume 2  
Number 1  
Winter 2001

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as  
received from the person or organization  
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to  
improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this  
document do not necessarily represent  
official OERI position or policy.

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**



Equipped  
for the future

### In this issue...

- 1 From the Director
- 1 From Ron Pugsley, Director of the DAEL, Office of Vocational and Adult Education
- 2 Integrating EFF Content Standards With the US DOE's National Reporting System
- 5 How Instructors Can Support Adult Learners Through Performance-Based Assessment
- 6 A Closer Look at the Five States Participating in This Year's Field Development Work
- 6 EFF Timeline
- 9 The Four Dimensions of Performance
- 11 For More Information About Equipped for the Future
- 12 About the EFF National Center and National Conference Schedule for March 2001



**National Institute  
for Literacy**

1775 I Street, NW,  
Suite 730,  
Washington, DC  
20006-2401

Tel 202/233-2025

Fax 202/233-2050

www.nifl.gov



# EFF VOICE

EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

## The EFF-NRS Project: A Win-Win Proposition

Dear Colleagues:

**T**his issue of the *EFF Voice* is important for all of us concerned about improving the quality of adult literacy services. It focuses on current research and development efforts to develop an assessment framework for the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Content Standards.

As in all earlier phases of EFF R&D, this work engages practitioners in the field, as well as researchers and other technical advisors, as partners in the development process. In this way, we can be sure of three critical effects: that the approach to assessment developed is based on state-of-the-art knowledge about how people learn and how to measure learning; that it is useful to teachers in planning and implementing instruction in response to learner needs; and that it is meaningful to students themselves in defining what needs to be learned in order to meet specific everyday responsibilities.

I am excited about the progress of this work and about the commitment of our state and program partners in Maine, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington. We could not be making this contribution to the field without our partners' willingness to invest time and resources in helping us understand what performance looks like for adult learners at every level along the continuum—from novice to expert.

But what excites me most is our partnership with the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Edu-

cation and Literacy (DAEL). The joint National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)-DAEL funding and support for this project demonstrates our willingness to collaborate on issues critical to strengthening adult education. And it means that the work we are doing can really move the whole field forward.

As most of you know, NIFL has been involved for the past 18 months in coordinating the work of the National Literacy Summit 2000. The summit's yearlong, nationwide consensus-building process resulted in the report "From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Action Agenda for Literacy," whose findings strongly reinforce the importance of EFF.

EFF offers essential tools for helping us achieve  
(See **Message from the Director**, page 2)

### A Message from Ron Pugsley, Director of the DAEL, Office of Vocational and Adult Education:

In response to the Department's need to track and report program outcomes under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Division of Adult Education and Literacy has been working closely with practitioners to develop an accountability system that will effectively tell our story.

EFF's goals are clearly related to this effort. Some of the core measures of performance in the accountability system reflect mastery of skills that EFF has identified as essential content knowledge. Where the Department's system reports learners' progress in multiple levels of language and basic skill development, EFF is developing a performance continuum for each of its 16 Content Standards and plans to develop assessments of learner progress through that continuum.

It is our hope and expectation that this current joint effort will inform the work of defining a continuum of performance and provide a set of performance benchmarks to provide a framework for the development of assessment tools to measure learner progress.

We are committed to working with NIFL to assure that, upon completion of this work to develop a performance continuum and appropriate assessment tools, we will be able to include EFF results in the National Reporting System (NRS) for adult education.



The *EFF Voice* is a quarterly publication of the EFF National Center.

We encourage submission of letters, articles, and other items of interest from the field of adult education. Please direct all correspondence, including editorial comments, to:

Donna Curry, Publications Coordinator  
EFF National Center  
5766 Shibbes Hall  
University of Maine  
Orono, Maine 04469-5766  
207/581-2402, ext. 13  
donna@clinic.net

The *EFF Voice* concentrates on a specific topic for each issue. The next issue will focus on the topic:

#### Family Literacy

If you have information on Family Literacy that you would like to see included, contact Donna Curry at the address listed above.

**EFF HOT** (Highlights On Teaching Topics) is a new quarterly publication of the EFF National Center geared toward EFF teachers. Each issue concentrates on a specific topic of interest, highlighting examples of actual practice and offering strategies and tools for using EFF in the classroom. Contact Donna Curry (see above) for more information.

## Integrating EFF Content Standards With the U.S. DOE's National Reporting System

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), an independent federal organization, and the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) have agreed to jointly fund a project intended to create strong linkages between the National Reporting System (NRS) and the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Content Standards. [For more information on the NRS, see the box on page 3.] The goal of the project is to collect sufficient performance data on each EFF Standard to enable us to:

- a. Identify representative EFF performance tasks that address the knowledge and skills necessary for transition from one NRS level to the next for up to ten EFF Standards.
- b. Identify such transition tasks for movement between all six Adult Basic Education (ABE) levels and all six English for Speakers of Other Languages

#### What is an EFF Performance Task?

It is a learning activity that meets learners' purposes and addresses all components of an EFF Standard. It informs all steps of the instructional planning, teaching, and assessment cycle. It addresses a real-world adult activity and can be analyzed according to the dimensions of performance.

(ESOL) levels on the NRS.

- c. Develop a rich body of standards-based performance descriptors for each NRS level, which can be used to validate and enrich the existing body of level descriptors.

Since 1998, programs in over 25 states have been using the EFF framework—from intake to instruction to assessment. Many of these programs are supported by state and federal funding that now requires them to use the new U.S. Department of Education NRS to report learner

### Message from the Director,

*continued from page 1*

key summit priorities in the area of program quality. It is based on a broad, customer-driven consensus that reflects a major Summit goal: instruction should focus on real-life skills that make a difference in people's daily lives. And it is aimed at providing new tools for assessing results, in keeping with the Summit's emphasis on the importance of assessment data to improving instruction and providing clear information on results. Finally, our current work with DAEL enables us to begin another important task called for by the Summit—reconciling the goals of EFF and NRS.

Through the development of perfor-

mance continua for EFF standards, we will be able to show how the standards relate to the NRS and can demonstrate progress toward NRS levels. And when the time comes to revise the NRS, our joint NIFL-DAEL project will have produced a rich set of data that can be used to develop an even stronger system of reporting and accountability. We are convinced that students, educators, policy-makers, and the public will all benefit from the work we will do together.

The EFF-NRS project is a win-win proposition. We look forward to working with our colleagues at DAEL—and with all of you—to make it a success. ▲

gains by levels. These programs have expressed concerns about how to link their work with EFF to the NRS. State Directors of Adult Education and Regional Coordinators in many states have also asked for help in developing links between EFF and the NRS.

NIFL/EFF agreed to work toward this goal by ensuring that, in defining a performance continuum for each of the EFF Standards, we would do everything we could to facilitate direct correspondences with the levels proposed in the NRS. We chose to focus on the next generation of the NRS, since we knew that the EFF research had not progressed far enough by the July 2000 deadline.

### Background

In January 1999, NIFL/EFF began work toward developing an assessment framework for the EFF Standards. First, we commissioned a series of papers for internal use on assessment-related issues that would have to be addressed in order to assure that programs and states can reliably and validly assess and report progress in relation to the standards. [One of the papers, *How Instructors Can Support Adult Learners through Performance-Based Assessments*, by Sri Ananda, is available to the public. See page 5 for details.]

In April 1999, NIFL/EFF began work-

ing with ten field development sites to define performance continua for the EFF Content Standards. Teachers at these sites

were asked to use the standards in planning and guiding instruction and in documenting and evaluating learner performance. Teacher reports on learner progress were then analyzed in relation to cognitive sci-

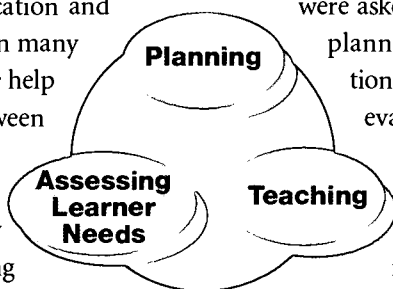
ence research on expertise to identify four dimensions of performance that were important to consider in rating how well an individual could use an EFF skill to carry out real life tasks. These dimensions of performance are:

- Structure of knowledge base,
- Fluency of performance,
- Independence of performance, and
- Range of conditions for performance.

[For more information about these four dimensions of performance, see "The Four Dimensions" article on page 9.]

In January 2000, 15 sites in five states (highlighted on pages 6-8 of this issue) began collecting snapshots of what adult learner performance looks like along a continuum based on these four dimensions. In taking this approach to defining the performance continuum for each standard, our goal was to make sure that the continuum we defined for each standard reflected the actual range of adult

(Continued on page 4)



### IN THEIR OWN WORDS



#### Fran Tracy-Mumford, Delaware State Adult Education Director:

"The effort that EFF is putting into linking with the NRS will benefit students, programs, and the state. The linkage will help states document NRS exit levels for federal reporting. Programs will be able to translate the six EFF learner performance levels to NRS levels. This linkage becomes practical for students because EFF descriptions translate into immediate application as a worker, family member, or community member.

"When learners come to our program, they don't talk in NRS terms—they talk in EFF terms. With EFF helping to define the performance levels, we will be able to translate from "learner speak" to "federal speak." That's why it's important that the performance continuum now being developed have benchmarks. Clear definitions to accompany those benchmarks, rather than merely a standard score on an assessment, will help programs translate learning to real-life applications."



#### Jim Bowling, Ohio State Adult Education Director:

"This partnership between the National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education holds great promise for moving the field forward in a serious and significant way. The potential for using the results of this work can make a major contribution to improving programs and services at all levels—local, state, and national."

### About The NRS

The NRS is an outcome-based reporting system for federally funded adult education programs, as required by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

The goal of the NRS is to improve the public accountability of adult education programs by documenting their ability to meet federal policy guidelines and goals. National reporting of results will be based on the aggregation of all states' aggregated data. However, each state's outcome data will be used to assess whether it is meeting its goals and requirements. Each state is also expected to look at each program's aggregated data in order to ensure that student outcomes are met.



## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### **Bob Crotzer, Maine State**

#### **Adult Education ABE Coordinator:**

"EFF helps us to tune into what's really important to the learners; takes us away from producing cold—but seemingly very objective—standardized tests. EFF is helping us to look at assessment that is more meaningful and helpful to the learner as well as the program.

"Five years from now, with EFF assessment strategies in place, I envision adult education being a place where learners are directors of their own learning. Learners will have expanded their sense of responsibility for learning, accepting the fact that they themselves know best what they need to learn. Teachers will be the facilitators of that process, but they will be the ones who accept the fact that they determine whether they learn or not."



### **Sharlene Walker, Oregon State**

#### **Adult Education Director:**

"EFF surrounds the intent of the law with a framework based on research, theory and practice. It provides tools and strategies for local programs to connect purposeful curriculum with better instruction and informative assessment. The framework is reflected in Oregon's history of a systems approach to adult basic education."

*(Continued from page 3)*

learner performance—especially at the "novice" end of the continuum which has been underrepresented in existing assessment systems.

To make sure that teachers were focused on the same construct, they used standardized templates created by the EFF Assessment Team and a standard data collection reporting protocol to collect data on student performance. This protocol guided teachers in using the standards and dimensions to plan and carry out lessons centered on well-structured learning tasks and to assess learner performance in relation to those tasks. EFF Field Research staff worked with teachers to ensure that at least three teachers were collecting data on each standard (more in the case of the five communication standards). These data collection practices assured that, for each standard, we collected data based on the same "construct" of the standard that, as a result, can be aggregated to build a valid continuum of performance for that standard.

#### **Joint EFF/NRS Project**

The Joint EFF/NRS Data Collection Project builds on this past year's documentation, doubling the number of practitioners collecting performance data in these five states. Data collected through this project will be used to develop a continuum for each standard that represents progress in two ways: the tasks get more difficult (more complex), and learner performance of those tasks becomes more proficient.

In order to build a linkage to the six NRS levels for ABE and ESOL, participants in the project will work with DAEL, State Coordinators, and the EFF Assessment Team to:

#### **1. Identify performance tasks for each EFF Standard that match the transition**

**point from level to level on the NRS.** The tasks at every level will address all of the skill's components of performance, reflecting our assumption that students at every level need to be able to use their developing skills in daily life.

**2. Use descriptions of student performance in relation to these transition tasks to enrich the level descriptors for those skills that are currently included in the NRS,** and to begin developing level descriptors for EFF skills that are not yet part of the NRS.

Training and technical assistance provided through this project will produce a corps of practitioners in all five states with considerable expertise in producing valid, reliable performance data. This should result in better data and reporting overall through the NRS, and enable programs using EFF as a framework for instruction to report progress using the NRS levels.

The approach to linking EFF Standards with NRS levels is based on what we now know about the EFF performance continua. As we work with DAEL and the five states to collect more data on tasks and learner performance over the next 12-18 months, we expect to learn more about the best ways to measure progress and certify learner performance on each EFF Standard. At present, our intention is to create linkages between the two systems, using transition tasks to describe what performance looks like as learners move from level to level. Our goal is to assure that, in the next generation of the NRS, adult learning programs and states will be able to report learner progress from level to level on all 16 EFF Standards and to report achievement of measurable learner outcomes related to the roles of parent/family member, citizen/community member and worker.

Presently, the only achievements of

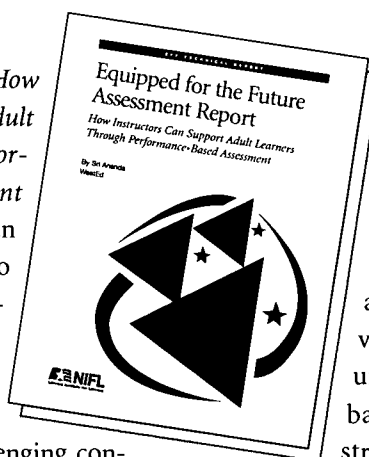
measurable learner outcomes are those related to the worker role, and EFF is continuing to work with the National Skill Standards Board to further develop those. However, through this EFF/NRS linkage work, we hope to be able to develop mea-

surable learner outcomes related to the other two roles. We hope to develop a body of performance descriptors that will eventually help programs describe achievement in areas related to the family, the community, and the workplace. ▲

#### EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE ASSESSMENT REPORT:

## How Instructors Can Support Adult Learners Through Performance-Based Assessment

Sri Ananda's monograph *How Instructors Can Support Adult Learners Through Performance-Based Assessment* (NIFL, 2000) provides an excellent introduction to performance-based assessment "as part of a comprehensive system aimed at measuring student performance relative to challenging content and performance standards."



This handbook provides an orientation to the key characteristics of effective performance-based assessments. According to Ananda, these assessments should:

- demonstrate technical quality, i.e., reliability and validity;
- be linked directly to standards;
- be grounded in theories of learning;
- serve as both instructional and assessment tools;
- be cognitively demanding (requiring application and integration of knowledge); and
- reflect and accommodate diversity.

Using performance-based assessments that have these key characteristics will require a shift in the roles of the instructor and the student.

A performance-based assessment, sometimes called alternative or authentic assessment, requires a learner to construct or produce a response to a task or

stimulus. Rather than select a "right" answer from a list of choices, the learner is required to think creatively, reflect and evaluate, synthesize, and communicate in a variety of ways. Under the umbrella of performance-based assessment are such strategies as projects, port-

folios, performance tasks, computer simulations, scientific or mathematical inquiries, and research reports. Ananda, in her monograph focuses on three strategies: written scenarios; projects; and portfolios.

The aim of this handbook is to guide practitioners, step by step, through developing performance tasks that can be used for identification of students' strengths and weaknesses for diagnostic and planning purposes, curriculum development, and assessment for reporting purposes.

Presently, the field development project participants have the specific task of creating performance tasks, not performance assessments, as part of their research and data collection process. Eventually, though, performance assessments will need to be incorporated into the adult education assessment system in order to assess learners' ability to apply the standards in real-world activities. ▲

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### Joan Benz, Instructor at Lane Community College and Field Assistant for Oregon's field development sites:

"When we talk about another way to identify progress with our learners, teachers get excited. Up to now, we've been limited to paper/pencil types of tests and teachers tend to teach to those tests when that's what is assessed and reported.

"The biggest change that has happened to me because of EFF is that I have become much more intentional. I now look at what I do and why. I had to throw a lot of what I did away—including some fun activities. I now have holes in my teaching that I have to fix. I like the research and solid foundation that EFF is based upon. EFF has made me think more about pre-assessment—what do learners already know and what do they still need to know, asking learners what vocabulary they already understand—again, being intentional in teaching."



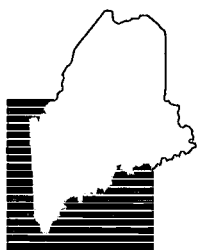
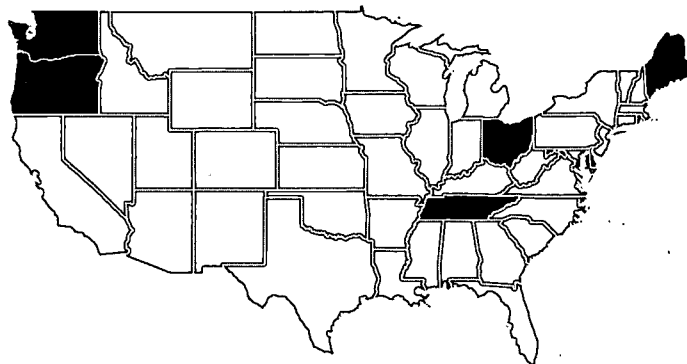
### Donna Miller-Parker, ABLE Network (Washington):

"EFF is consistent with the practices and philosophy of adult education here in Washington State. Teachers need lots of staff development, not because they aren't already doing it, but to help them move from the instinctive to the explicit level, and to be able to consistently calibrate performance assessment tasks."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



## A Closer Look at the Five States Participating in this Year's Field Development Work



### MAINE

- Six programs are involved in the EFF/NRS field development work.
- Maine Department of Education has offered regional NRS workshops that included linkages to EFF to all federally-funded ABE programs across the state.

- EFF is built into the state plan and is an integral part of the delivery system for federally-funded ABE programs. Financial support for implementation is provided to individual programs.
- Each federally-funded ABE program has an EFF contact person who receives training and support from the state's Center for Adult Learning and Literacy. These EFF contact people then provide training and support to their local district adult education

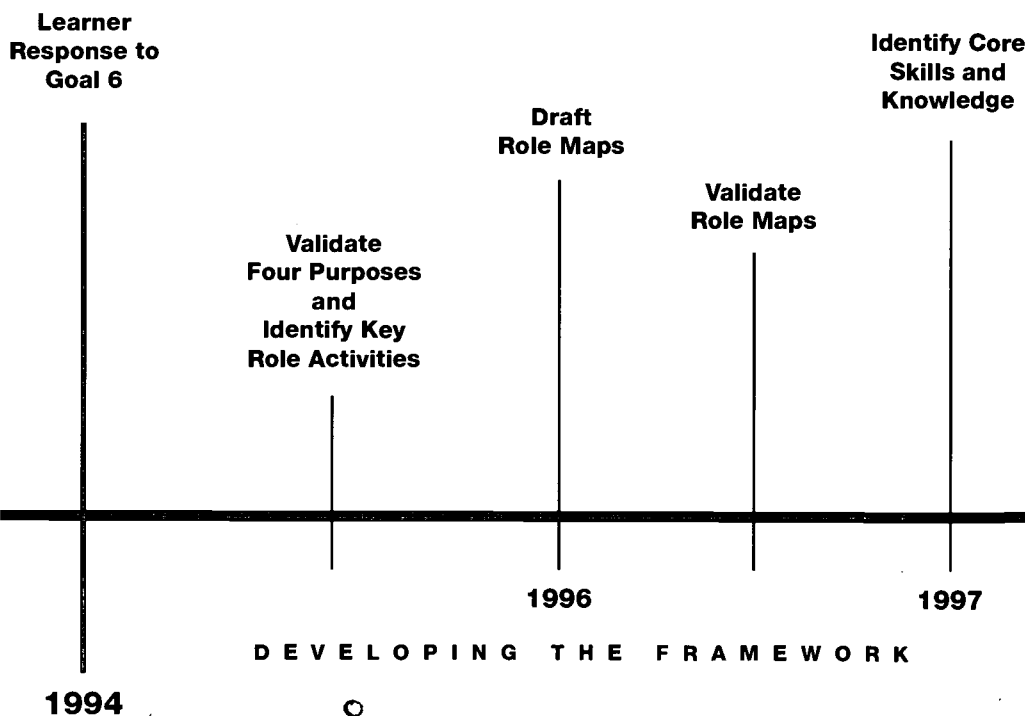
staff. A minimum of 12 hours of staff development is required for ABE teachers in local programs.

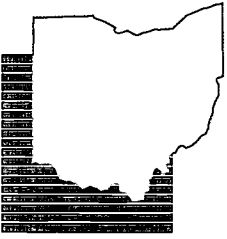
- Maine will continue to hold both regional and statewide sharing sessions so that, as an entire state, it can continue to develop its programs as it implements EFF.
- The Maine Adult and Community Education Team has been oriented to EFF and supports its implementation. All visioning, planning ses-

sions, and meetings incorporate the EFF standards framework. One team member is designated as having responsibility for assisting program administrators with the implementation of EFF.

- A Literacy Council is being developed. This Council will be responsible for providing guidance in the development of the vision for Maine Adult Education. It will also provide support and feedback to the state staff on the implementation of EFF.

## Equipped for the Future Timeline 1994-2004





## OHIO

- Five programs are involved in the EFF/NRS field development work.
- For the third year, Ohio has invested in an EFF Pilot program. This has been a building process from one to nine to 30 programs, with program support being offered by the State Leadership Network [Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Ohio Literacy Resource Center (OLRC), four Regional ABLE Resource Centers, Ohio State University (OSU), and Ohio Literacy Network (OLN)].

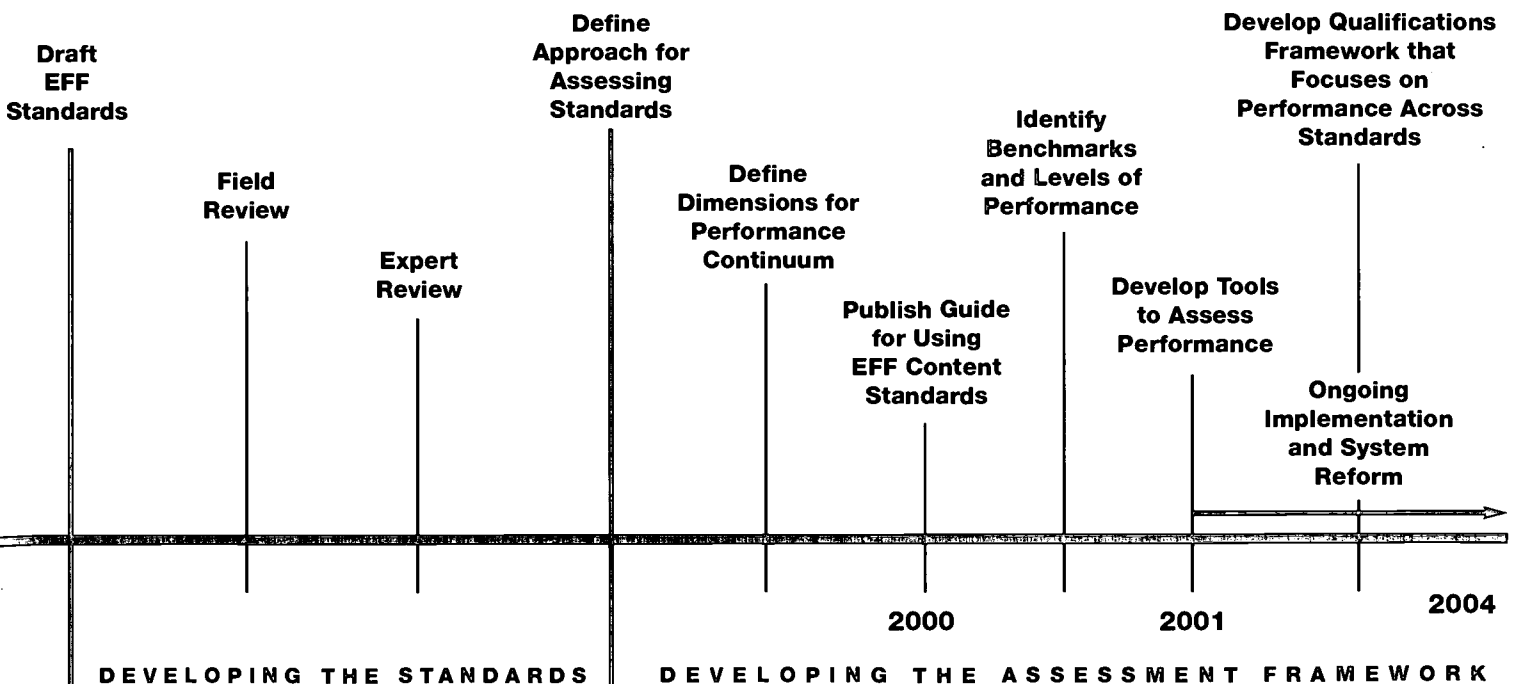
- During the last year, Ohio offered all ABLE-funded programs an opportunity to participate in Program Quality Enhancement Grants focused on EFF. Thirty programs responded, with seven programs moving to a Phase II level (four programs are involved as National Field Sites and three programs are implementing EFF at a program level), and 27 programs at a Phase I, or orientation, level. Several programs were involved in both levels of development.
- Funds from the Program Quality Enhancement Grants were used to capture information on how EFF impacts different areas of adult education programs, from teaching to intake to marketing. At the end of last year's grant period, documentation was collected in *The EFF Journey*. [For more informa-

tion on *The EFF Journey*, contact Judy Franks at 330-672-0753.]

- The OLRC has created Eureka!, a database for the collection of lesson plans developed by the pilots. Eureka! is available online at <http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka>.
- The Ohio Uniform Portfolio System (Ohio-UPS) was created as an assessment and accountability system for collecting and analyzing student work in order to document student progress and advancement from one educational level to the next. Ways to correlate the EFF standards with the Documentation Logs are currently being explored.
- Ohio is developing and training an 11-member Regional Training Team con-

sisting of OLRC, ODE, and OSU representatives, as well as a Regional Resource Center staff member and a regional program teacher. These trainers are building their knowledge base and will provide regional EFF support to the field.

- A member of the Regional Training Team was awarded a NIFL fellowship to design assessment activities that are based on the EFF standards but that also accommodate Ohio's ESOL benchmarks for the six NRS levels. Teachers can use these activities for documentation of progress in student portfolios.
- The Regional Resource Center Network will be incorporating EFF into core trainings and is working together to develop an action plan.



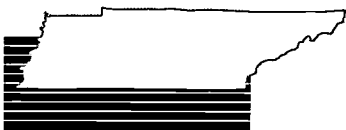
- While the language of the three roles has been written into the state plan, EFF has not been officially adopted. The State Leadership Network is working with the EFF National Center to develop a strategic implementation plan with the long-range goal of incorporating additional phases of EFF development into the state plan through 2004.



#### OREGON

- Five programs are involved in the EFF/NRS field development work.
- The EFF Framework has been blended into the state's secondary standards for high school completion and GED (General Educational Development). These standards include performance-based assessments.
- The language of the three EFF roles (worker, family member, and citizen) has been explicitly written into the state plan, but EFF has not been officially adopted.
- An EFF Orientation is being integrated into the Professional Development System available to all adult educators.

- Oregon adult educators are very receptive to EFF, and are requesting more detailed training on how to implement EFF in their programs. Specifically, they're trying to figure out how to implement EFF without it being an add-on.
- Oregon practitioners, along with the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, are working on aligning Family Literacy, Corrections, Tutoring, and Adult Basic Skills goals to the NRS.
- Oregon's philosophy of "connectivity" is evidenced in its program development and improvement model, which integrates all the different aspects of adult education.



#### TENNESSEE

- Three programs are involved in the EFF/NRS field development work.
- Other programs across the state are gradually adopting EFF one step at a time. For example, some programs are changing their intake process by focusing on learner goals. Others may be examining one standard and its implications in the classroom.
- Tennessee has incorporated EFF into the state plan for professional development.

- EFF was a key criterion in the process for awarding English Language and Civics grants to local programs.
- The Tennessee Department of Human Services has funded the revision and publication of the *Learning Skills Curriculum*, a four-week orientation class based on a model developed by the Knox County Adult Literacy Program, an EFF field site. The curriculum, which is built around the EFF Standards, is being piloted in selected programs and will be available state-wide next year.
- The Center for Literacy Studies (CLS) coordinates dissemination of information about EFF in the state. Many CLS staff participated in field site training in October, as part of their own professional development.



#### WASHINGTON

- Five programs are involved in the EFF/NRS field development work.
- Washington has incorporated the EFF Framework into the state plan and programs receiving ABE funding must agree to implement components of the Framework.

- Washington uses EFF in a crosswalk with all state agencies that impact adults.
- Washington's philosophy of adult education has made it easier to move all programs toward EFF implementation.
- Washington's State Literacy Resource Center provides training and materials related to EFF.
- EFF is linked directly to the state's welfare-to-work requirements.
- EFF has been a requirement of Washington's state-funded Families at Work initiative for two years. Funding and support personnel assisted these programs in determining how EFF impacts instruction.
- The State Performance Task Group is developing an interim performance system to use over the next four years for this generation of the NRS. This process involves a firm commitment by the Department of Adult Literacy which continues to advocate for practitioner input into the development of assessment materials that include performance-based activities.
- Washington has embraced standards for many years, including them as part of its program monitoring process. The challenge has been to figure out how to base funding on performance, and the state is looking to EFF for guidance. ▲

# The Four Dimensions of Performance

The Four Dimensions of Performance are being used to inform the planning, instruction, and assessment process in the current EFF field development sites. Because these four dimensions make sense as a way of thinking about student progress, we have seen evidence that teachers implicitly think about them when they describe what students know and can do. However, in order to design effective learning activities that give learners an opportunity to show they can use a standard to perform, teachers and learners need to explicitly consider the four dimensions—*knowledge base, fluency, independence, and range*.

Let's take a closer look at an illustration of how the four dimensions influence how we learn.

Think about something that you're fairly proficient at. It could be a hobby such as golf or gardening or reading. Or it could be a common task, like driving an automobile. How did you become proficient? How do you know you're proficient?

In answering these questions, you probably realized that, as you became more proficient, your understanding of what the skill or activity required increased. You

depended less on others—or other resources—for help; your ability to perform the activity in different situations under increasingly complex conditions improved. And, you as you grew more confident in your ability to perform the activity, some components of it became more automatic.

According to the latest research on how people learn, that's how people move from novice to expert. Researchers say that the four dimensions of performance influence how people move from novice to expert in any area.<sup>1</sup>

When you first learned to drive a car, you needed to study the rules. You had to pass a written driver's test that covered a broad range of knowledge to "prove" that you had the knowledge to drive safely. Now, when you find yourself in particular driving situations, you don't think about all those rules—just the ones that are related to the particular situation.

## 1. Knowledge Base

Experts not only have a wealth of knowledge, but they organize their knowledge into meaningful patterns around big ideas, basic principles, for easy retrieval. They have a vast bank of knowledge related to their field or subject, and they know when and how to readily access the knowledge needed at a particular time. According to cognitive scientists, experts' knowledge is "conditionalized—it includes a specification of the contexts in which it is useful." (*How People Learn*, pg. 31)

(continued on page 10)

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



**Jane Meyer, Director  
Canton, OH ABLE Program:**

"When using the four dimensions of performance, I saw the teachers thinking more about what each individual student knew and could do before the lesson and using this information to plan instruction. Then, looking again at the four dimensions of performance after the learning activities helped the teachers to report student progress in more detail, but much of it was teacher observation. We need assessment beyond teacher observation to measure changes in knowledge base, independence, fluency, and range. Reflecting on the four dimensions of performance also helped students to better articulate what they were learning and why."



**Eleanor Lockwood, Director  
Windham, ME Adult Education:**

"I am very encouraged by the presence of the NRS folks around the EFF table, the discussion of retaining six levels, and the hope that this work will impact NRS four years hence."



**Kim Gass, Supervisor  
Greenville City Adult Basic  
Education, Greenville, TN:**

"Participation in this research enables us to respond to our general public who often wonder what we are up to! Our administration is noticing that we are not the GEDers' down the street who get the leftovers and problems of the community. We are a highly accountable, successful, and meaningful part of the educational community."

<sup>1</sup> *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (John D. Bransford, Ann L. Brown, Rodney R. Cockings, Eds. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. 1999).

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### **Regie Stites, Educational Researcher, Center for Education and Human Services, SRI International**

"The EFF role maps, standards, common activities, and—eventually—performance continua and benchmarks of performance are part of an integrated framework that can help teachers align learners' goals with curriculum design and teaching practices and with measures of learning progress. Admittedly, this is a tall order for the teacher, and the fact that curriculum and assessments used to inform instruction are poorly aligned with the standardized tests used for external reporting and accountability makes the job even harder.

"To improve on the current 'misaligned' system, progress needs to be made at both the program and systems level. Substantial investment in staff development is the starting point for alignment at the program level. Staff development should provide teachers with the models, support, and guided practice they need to apply the EFF framework to aligning learning goals with teaching practice and with measures of learning at the program level. At the same time, work is needed at the level of accountability systems to better capture results that matter."

(continued from page 9)

**You probably don't think twice now about the coordination needed to start the car, put it in reverse, and steer appropriately while looking in the rearview mirror. Think about how challenging you thought this was when you first began learning to drive—too many things to think about all at once!**

Again, think about learning to drive. First, you had to have an adult in the car with you when you got your learner's permit. **As your comfort and knowledge about driving improved, you were able to venture out alone.**

First, you probably just drove around a quiet block. Then you drove where there was a bit more traffic. **As your understanding of how other motorists operate and your knowledge about the rules of the road became more automatic, you tried driving on the interstate.** For at least some of you, the range of driving experiences may also have included cars without automatic transmission, or perhaps trucks, vans, or even tractors. ▲

### **2. Fluency**

Experts can effortlessly and automatically retrieve and apply relevant knowledge in a particular situation. This easy retrieval does not necessarily suggest that experts can do so more quickly than others; in fact, they may take more time, because they are capable of looking at an issue from more angles than those who have less of a knowledge base.

### **3. Independence**

As individuals move from novice to expert, they are able to function with less guidance and support as they become more independent in their ability to retrieve and apply knowledge to specific situations. Not only are experts able to perform with greater independence, they are also better able to determine what kinds of assistance they may need.

### **4. Range**

Individuals are able to use skills and knowledge in increasingly complex tasks as they move from novice to expert. The situations in which they address tasks becomes more varied as their knowledge base increases and their performance becomes more fluent and independent.

### **Equipped for the Future Contact People**

■ **National Director:** Sondra Stein,  
sstein@nifl.gov, 202-233-2041,  
National Institute for Literacy

■ **Research and Data  
Collection:** Brenda Bell,  
bsbell@utkux.utk.edu, 865-974-6654,  
EFF Research Center, Center for  
Literacy Studies, University of  
Tennessee

■ **Staff Development, Technical  
Assistance and Materials:**  
Lisa Levinson, LisaL595@aol.com,  
207-581-2402, EFF National Center,  
University of Maine

■ **Assessment:** Peggy McGuire,  
peggymcguire@erols.com,  
215-843-8384, Center for Literacy  
Studies, University of Tennessee



## For More Information About Equipped for the Future

### On-Line Resources

■ **LINCS** is the NIFL's on-line connection to adult literacy information. Region-specific collections are available to connect state and local organizations, practitioners, researchers, and learners. The site address is: <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs>

■ **The Equipped for the Future Website** is a special collection of *LINCS*. Visit this site to learn more about the EFF initiative. Anyone with an active Internet connection and a Web-browsing program can download the EFF Framework and the EFF Content Standards document, and can find out about current EFF publications, announcements, and events. The site address is: <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff>

■ **The Equipped for the Future Discussion List** is an ongoing, on-line conversation about EFF by teachers, administrators, and others interested in and using EFF.  
*To view the archives:*  
Go to <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff>, select "Online Discussion" from the "Features" menu, and choose archives for a specific year.  
*To subscribe to the discussion list:*  
Go to <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff>, choose "Subscribe to the NIFL-4EFF List" option and follow the prompts. (You may also subscribe by sending the following message from your e-mail account: To: [listproc@literacy.nifl.gov](mailto:listproc@literacy.nifl.gov) Subject: leave blank Message: **Subscribe NIFL-4EFF your first name your last name**)

### Print Resources Available

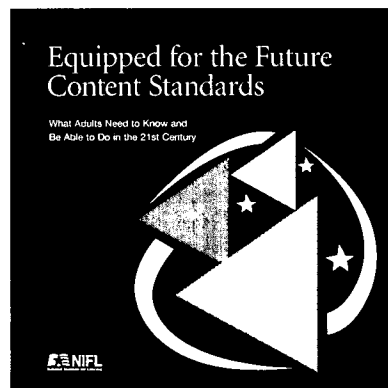
To request single copies of our published Equipped for the Future materials, please contact the National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs at this toll free number, **1-800-113**. For written requests, their

address is **ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; fax: 301-470-1244**. The web site is: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>, or email them at [EdPubOrders@aspensys.com](mailto:EdPubOrders@aspensys.com)

For multiple copies, please contact the Equipped for the Future National Center at **207-581-2402**, or email Dawn Norris at [dawn.norris@umit.maine.edu](mailto:dawn.norris@umit.maine.edu). For all publications, please order by the publication number in parentheses.

■ **Equipped for the Future: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning**. Published in 1995, this book describes the vision and research basis of EFF's initiative for reforming the adult literacy and lifelong education system. (EX 0019P) This document can be downloaded at: <http://www.nifl.gov/EFF/content.htm>

■ **Equipped for the Future: A Reform Agenda for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning**. This 1997 publication builds on the previous work, reporting the continuing research and development of EFF's content framework for adult performance standards. (EX 0020P)



■ **Equipped for the Future Content Standards: What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century**. The newly released content standards guide describes the EFF development process, content standards, how the

standards have been used in programs and where EFF is headed as we develop our assessment and reporting systems. (EX 0099P) This document can be downloaded at: [http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/standards\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/standards_guide.pdf)

■ **Equipped for the Future Research Report: Building the Framework**, 1993-1997 by Juliet Merrifield. This July 2000 publication documents the research conducted through the summer of 1997, including the process of gathering and analyzing data to create the framework, and the concepts and theories involved. (EX 0106P) This document can be downloaded at: [http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/merrifield\\_eff.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/merrifield_eff.pdf)

■ **Equipped for the Future Assessment Report: How Instructors Can Support Adult Learners Through Performance-Based Assessment**. This July 2000 publication introduces instructors to specific performance-based assessment methods that show promise for measuring progress relative to the EFF Standards. (EX 0110P) This document can be downloaded at: [http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/ananda\\_eff.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/ananda_eff.pdf)

■ **EFF Skills Wheel Posters** are still available. These 22" x 36" full-color posters clearly display the 16 EFF skills/standards, along with their relation to the four categories of skills. To order, please contact:  
Dawn Norris at **207-581-2402** or [dawn.norris@umit.maine.edu](mailto:dawn.norris@umit.maine.edu).

Pricing is as follows:

1 poster	\$5.00 ea.
2-4 posters	\$3.00 ea.
5-9 posters	\$1.75 ea.
10-14 posters	\$1.25 ea.
15+ posters	\$1.10 ea.





# EFF VOICE

1775 I Street, NW  
Suite 730  
Washington, DC 20006

---

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PERMIT NO. G-17

---

EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

12  
EFF VOICE  
WINTER 2001

## About the EFF National Center

The Equipped for the Future National Center at the University of Maine was created in 1999 as the staff development, materials, and technical assistance center for EFF implementation. The EFF National Center's primary responsibility is to reach out and establish strong linkages with key partners, including adult education, family literacy, welfare to work, skill standards voluntary partnerships; and other workforce development systems, and to assure that these partners have the support needed to integrate EFF as part of their effort to deliver desired results. The activities of the EFF National Center include: develop a national network of certified EFF trainers; develop materials and products to support EFF adoption and use; provide customized training and technical assistance to the key customer systems; and support current EFF users.

Through its corps of national facilitators and on-going train-the-trainer institutes, the Center assures quality EFF staff development. If you are interested in discussing how EFF can work within your organization, scheduling EFF staff development training, or want to discuss EFF implementation in your state, agency, or organization, please contact Lisa Levinson, the EFF National Center Director, at 81-2402 ext. 17, or email her at LisaL595@aol.com. ▲

## Calendar of Events for March 2001 National Conference

**March 16-20**

### **Tenth Annual National Conference on Family Literacy**

*Location:* Dallas, TX

*Contact for EFF:* Dawn Norris

*Contact for the National Conference:* Carmel Mackin,  
Operations Officer – 502-584-1133

*Presenters:* Jane Meyer

Lisa Levinson

Sondra Stein

*Participants:* Family literacy practitioners, administrators,  
policymakers and researchers

---

**For more information on state and national EFF  
presentations, visit our website:**

**[http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff\\_news\\_events](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff_news_events)**



*U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
National Library of Education (NLE)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*



## **NOTICE**

### **Reproduction Basis**

☐

This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☒

This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").